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Helen's Journal

Part 1: Germany

By Helen Lamm

(Translated into English)

Unpublished work © 1949 Helen Lamm

Helen Lamm's Journal was largely written between March 1927 and June 1938, chronicling the eleven-year period between her marriage to Willy Lamm and the family's escape from Nazi persecution.

The author was born in 1895 as Johanna Helene Marcus, but commonly used her middle name ("Helene" in German, or "Helen" in English) rather than her first name, as was fairly common at the time. The people appearing most often in the journal are her immediate family: her husband Willy Lamm, her son Herbert Lamm, and her daughter Ursula ("Ursel") Lamm. The events described take place mostly in Frankfurt, where Helene lived, and in Kreuznach, where she grew up.

The journal is half diary and half photo album, with numerous pictures, postcards, and letters glued to its pages. The author continued occasional work on the journal almost until her death in 1953, so some of the items attached to its pages are not in chronological order.

The author did continue diary writing after the family's escape from Germany in 1938, but started a new journal, written in English.

For this document, the transcription and translation were done by the author's daughter, Harriet (Ursula) Lamm Ezekiel; the author's granddaughter, Dione Lamm Perera; and the author's grandson, Alan Ezekiel.

In addition to the typed transcription and translation, you will also find page-by-page photographs of the entire original handwritten journal on the accompanying computer disk.

— AWE, July 2007

This book belongs to Willy and Helene Lamm, and was begun March 31 1927 at Jahnstraße #58 in Frankfurt-on-the-Main.¹

(photo, page 2: the couple on the right is Willy and Helene Lamm, walking together in the town of Bad Kreuznach. The caption says:)

February 19, 1927 in Kreuznach

Frankfurt-on-the-Main, March 31, 1927

Today on March 31st 1927 I am beginning this book, which I received as an especially beautiful gift for our wedding on February 20th from a friend of many years. It will include everything of importance that will occur from now on in my future wedded life, so that when we are old and look back upon our lives, things that have faded in memory will take on a new life. I hope it will record many beautiful memories.

Willy and I have been married almost six weeks, since we married on February 20th. We met each other in the middle of August last year, in Stromberg i/H.² I still remember the first time I saw Willy, that he somehow pleased and interested me. He was wearing a green-grey suit, a matching hat, and had the Frankfurter Zeitung and Berliner Tageblatt³ under his arm. He was walking slowly, with a relaxed posture, along the small road which led from the Stromberg train station to the Kurhaus. It was a warm summer day with a deep blue sky. We sat at the same table for lunch, and afterwards in conversation on the veranda. We talked about many different things, our deepest feelings and pretty much any and everything that is of interest to people who do not sit back idly and view life from a distance. However, our conversations remained on a superficial and intellectual level. We did not connect on a personal and emotional level until much later (long after Stromberg) and I'm somewhat surprised that we ever did. The day that really brought us closer together was the Day of Prayer and Repentance in Mainz on the 17th of November. Certain imponderables played a role; a walk through the forest in autumn mood, a bit of music at a café, and other things. Besides that, however, we both seemed to have simultaneously decided to set aside the cool restraint of independent adults who suspect an intention somewhere, and instead we really looked at each other and considered each other without reserve.

The following Sunday we met in Frankfurt and celebrated our secret engagement, even though we hadn't actually spoken aloud yet about getting engaged. We had lunch at the main train station and later went to a coffee house. We sat at a low table, both undisturbed on the sofa, chatting in the dim light, and Willy gave me a kiss. Later that night, in a good mood, we went to a lovely wine cellar. I was extremely happy, and I believe Willy was too.

¹ Because Germany has several places called "Frankfurt", each has a full name to distinguish it from the others. The largest city of that name is formally called *Frankfurt-am-Main* (Frankfurt-on-the-Main) because it is located along the banks of the Main river.

² *Stromberg-in-Hunsrück* is a small town near Bad Kreuznach. The *Hunsrück* is a low mountain range.

³ She probably noticed the names of the two newspapers because these specific newspapers indicate that Willy is both politically liberal and anti-Nazi. The *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* were two of the most liberal German newspapers of this period. Although the Nazis had not yet come to power as the author wrote this entry in 1927, Hitler had been released from prison and had re-organized the Nazis as a nation-wide political party with increasing power and support. The *Berliner Tageblatt* was eventually closed by Nazi authorities in 1939; the *Frankfurter Zeitung* followed in 1943.

Our engagement period from the 20th of November - or officially the 24th of December - was short and uneventful.

We married on the 20th of February, although we had already had small a civil ceremony on February 16th. It was a very dignified wedding. Mr. Bacharach performed the ceremony, and gave a sermon about the Tabernacle⁴ which was built at this time of year. He spoke of the seven-armed candelabra, which Moses placed there, so that harmony, peace, and unity, which he compared to the warm candlelight, would live in this house. (Regard this presentation as symbolic!) The reception was lovely. Father greeted the guests, and Baurat Völker⁵ gave a speech about the friendship which had bound him, his wife, and me through the years, and accepted Willy into the bond of that friendship. Doctor Otto Langenbach spoke eloquently about marriage, and specifically mentioned that a good marriage is based on friendship, which is the highest goal one can achieve in a relationship. That Doctor Langenbach spoke about marriage, and in such a manner, shows his great humanity. I will hold his words close for many years, and thank him from my heart.

Willy and I spent our wedding night in Frankfurt. We stayed at the Hotel Excelsior and also stayed Monday in Frankfurt due to a snowstorm. Tuesday morning at 7:12 we arrived in Kreuznach, where Mom and the Baurat's wife met us in the train station, and then continued through Saarbrücken, Metz, and on to Paris. We arrived that night around nine o'clock. We stayed in the Grand Hotel du Pavillon, Rue de l'Echiquier, in a wonderful room with a large french bed covered by a red silk quilt, a washroom adjacent to the bedroom, and every human comfort that the culture of the twentieth century could require. We saw nearly everything that foreigners like to see in Paris. Especially impressive for Willy and me were the Rodin Museum, parts of the Louvre, the Dôme des Invalides, and the Sorbonne church with the tomb of Richelieu. Architecturally, Paris is grandiose; the waste of space has an overwhelming effect.

Willy and I spent our days in blissful harmony and I discovered new sides of him that I had not seen before and came to love him more tenderly and deeply than before.

(postcard, page 6: the Grand Hotel du Pavillon in Paris)

(photo, page 6: the seated man is Helene's father, Ludwig Marcus)

April 28, 1927

I have not written in my book for some time. I do not know why. A few weeks ago I became aware that our little one had begun his nine month gestation. We both wish for a boy and his name shall be Herbert, if by the time he finally comes we have not thought of a better name. We are very happy! I can only hope he will develop well and be ready to face life. I sometimes have fears, thinking of the great responsibility you take upon yourself in bringing a new life into this world. Willy is dear and sensible, and we are getting along well.

⁴ Context makes clear that the word "tabernacle" here refers to the original Jewish temple in Jerusalem, destroyed by the Romans around year 70 AD.

⁵ Baurat Hugo Ludwig Völker (1878-1957) and his wife Else E. Völker (1878-1945) were good family friends from Bad Kreuznach, and appear several times in this diary. The family always addressed them as *Baurat* and *Baurätin* ("Mrs. Baurat") rather than by their names. Baurat is a respectful title with no precise English equivalent; a Baurat was a high government official responsible for architectural projects, urban design, municipal planning, construction, and land use. He also did architectural projects of his own; several of the buildings he designed still survive.

April 30, 1927

If only it didn't rain all the time! Yesterday we finally got a bit of sun (I quickly soak up every little ray I can) but today it is pouring. In the office it is so dark and cold and grey that it kills any good mood. I have not read or heard anything interesting lately - except maybe a novella written by Wilhelm von Schulz, which I enjoyed very much. I just bought another book by Max Dauthendey⁶ called "Raubmenschen", and in addition I'm curious about "the New Motherhood" by Margaret Sanger⁷, who has been vigorously criticized because of this book. Today, Saturday that is, I got my weekly allowance and will buy the *Journal* by Stefan Grossmann⁸, which is intelligent, refreshing, unsentimental, and lively.

(postcard, page 8: the Memorial of Friedrich the Great, sent by Willy's brother, Erich Lamm)

(postcard, page 8: the Café Roland in Berlin, sent by Willy's brother, Erich Lamm)

May 29, 1927

It seems like I need a whole month between entries in this diary. Since Friday, and for the first time in the 3 ¼ months since I married, I'm all on my own. Willy is in Berlin, probably until tomorrow morning; I will work from Friday to Tuesday with Rudolf Lismann⁹. Lismann has become somewhat wide – epically fat, in fact – and there is no going back. The little one has caused the occasional upset recently, but when I compare myself to others in my condition, I'm well satisfied. God willing our little one will be healthy because it truly was conceived in love and is expected with joy.

Today was a nice sunny day after many dreary, rainy and cold ones. Henny Rabe and I went to Hohemark¹⁰ and Homburg¹¹ and I enjoyed it thoroughly. The forest smelled so good and I was so thankful for it. We spoke about love and especially my love for my husband, for whom I feel a tenderness and genuine affection, more than I thought I ever would. At 7:30 we ate some dinner at the Saxony Inn in Hamburg and at 9:30 I returned home.

Last week I went to a new play by Paul Bourdet called "the Prisoner". It was about lesbian love, and dealt with the subject in a very tasteful yet shocking manner. Thursday (Ascension Day)¹² Willy and I first took a long walk and then went to Mrs. Weil's in Offenbach, and had a good talk. We read

⁶ Max Dauthendey (1867-1918) was an influential author and painter of the impressionistic period. His book "Raubmenschen" was published in 1911. I have been unable to find any evidence that it was ever translated into English.

⁷ "The New Motherhood" was published in English in 1922, and released in German as "die neue Mutterschaft" in 1927. Author Margaret Sanger was a lifelong crusader for reproductive choice and the availability of contraception, and was the original founder of the organization now named Planned Parenthood.

⁸ Stefan Großmann (1875-1935) was an Austrian playwright, author, and publisher with strong liberal and social beliefs. He wrote numerous books, articles, and plays from 1900 to 1930. He also published a weekly magazine of news and opinion called the *Tagebuch* ("Journal") which reflected his liberal and democratic opinions. He was ordered arrested by the Nazis in 1933, but because of extreme ill-health, was permitted to quietly retire in Austria where he died in 1935.

⁹ The author worked at the Red Cross; Rudolf Lismann was her employer.

¹⁰ The Hohemark is forested area northwest of Frankfurt, located in the Taunus mountains and easily accessible by subway.

¹¹ The city of *Bad Homburg vor der Höhe* is a picturesque town in the Taunus mountains north of Frankfurt. Today it is one of the wealthiest towns in Germany, being close enough to Frankfurt to serve as a residential suburb for Frankfurt's economic elite.

¹² Although the author was from a Jewish family, she was exposed to Christian traditions by the family nannies and maids, who frequently took the children with them to church. The author's sister, Aenne Marcus Goldstein, had clear recollections of being taken to a Christian Sunday school by the household maids. It is interesting that the author mentions the trappings of Christianity (religious holidays, churches, Christmas trees, crosses, etc) far more frequently than those of Judaism, for example, in this case where she identifies a particular Thursday as "Ascension Day".

through some old diaries and documents to learn more about her family history. We talked at length about her two children, who are smart and well-rounded both physically and mentally. I will think a lot about little Hartmut Weil.

(postcard, page 10 – written in 1939, so not in chronological order)

Dear Edith,¹³

How are you? We are in Holland now, the city is named Vlissingen. We are at the hotel Zeelund. The four of us have only one room. We are staying only until this evening, and then we're going onto the ship. Bye-bye! I have put a cross on the picture where our room is. We have room number two. The hotel itself is very pretty. Farewell to your parents and to you.

Ulla Lamm

November 16, 1927

Today it will be a year since our secret engagement on the Day of Prayer and Repentance in Mainz. The weather was just like today – gray and rainy. In the afternoon we took a walk in the park in Mainz and talked, if I remember correctly, very tentatively, carefully considering the effects of our words. Now almost nine months have passed since we married. I am now a happy wife and in four weeks I will hopefully be a happy mother. We have already prepared everything for the little one's arrival. Willy is really looking forward to it. I still have certain fears and, to be fair, how could I not, since so many unknowns await us.

(photo, page 12: Helene and Willy's newborn son, Herbert Lamm)

December 20, 1927

On December 6 at quarter past six in the evening, our son Herbert was born. He weighed 3.3 kilograms and is 50 centimeters long, with 34 cm chest circumference. He has long black hair and is – I say it with religious gratitude – a beautiful, well-developed child.

(photo, page 14/15: Herbert) Little man, 3 weeks old. It was very difficult and took an hour, but finally we got this photograph for father's birthday

(photo, page 14/15: Helene and Herbert) Herbert with Mama, about the middle of February 1928

(photo, page 14/15: Helene, Willy, and Herbert) The holy family, about the middle of February 1928

(postcard, page 16: a birthday card for Willy, written by Helene as if from Herbert) Little Herbert sends heartfelt birthday congratulations to his wonderful father

(photo, page 16: we don't know who the little girls are) January 4th 1928

¹³ This postcard is pasted into the diary many years out of chronological order. It was written by the author's daughter Ursel – who hasn't even been born yet at this point in the diary! – to her younger cousin Edith Nonnenmacher on the day the family boarded a ship in Holland, fleeing from Europe. The front of the postcard bears a photograph of the Hotel Zeelund.

(carbon copy of typed letter, page 17)

Frankfurt-on-the-Main, January 27th, 1928
from Jahn Street 58, second floor ¹⁴

My Dear Else,¹⁵

For weeks now I have intended to sit down and write you a detailed letter. I've also been planning to put a carbon copy of the letter into my so-called diary, which so far contains primarily an entry for Herbert's birth. As you can see, the lengthy and detailed letter never got past the stage of good intentions, until today when the earnest intention seized me to write to you before I do anything else. As you see, my intentions were all good, but unfortunately came to naught; I suppose you have been wondering where I have been.

First of all, I would like to thank you with all my heart for your lovely New Year's letter. In my mind's eye I see you in your home, content and serene, overlooking the festive light-filled city and celebrating the New Year. Our New Year was anything but festive. Willy took ill with a severe cold and had to stay in bed, and I could only nestle up next to him, exhausted. At midnight when the bells rang out, and despite his cold, we exchanged a loving kiss, and perhaps shared the same thoughts, although we didn't speak them aloud. The past year, 1927, has been so eventful for us. Herbert's birth was the prelude to a promising new year. It seems impossible that the weeks pass so quickly and he is already seven weeks old. And although I would have thought it impossible, the difficulties of childbirth are now behind me, and fading in my memory.

Herbert is developing with amazing speed, looking around and giggling, and he is extremely expressive when it comes to showing his happiness or displeasure. He grew 9 cm. and gained 3.5 pounds. Surprisingly, and after a hesitant start, breastfeeding is coming along nicely, after an initial period of almost complete failure. I can satisfy a little more than half of what he needs and would like to keep breastfeeding as long as possible.

I am sending you a photograph of Herbert taken by a photographer, as well as two snapshots taken by an employee. The one of me in my morning gown holding Herbert in my lap is the one that best reflects his true expression; amazed at the world around him, surprised, and mouth wide open looking up to the sky. The other one, as I told Willy, is more a composition of Rubens and Rembrandt, with me at the center as Helene Fourment¹⁶ (see the ample bosom), and the whole image illuminated by Rembrandt-style chiaroscuro.¹⁷ Willy looks so handsome, at least that would be my rather subjective opinion. Please do not show this picture to my dear family, but keep it only for yourself as a souvenir.

A small child shows you how old you've become. It's strange to think that with all you've acquired in your many years, you have to adapt yourself entirely to a small human being, who has to start from the very beginning, and with whom you must begin life all over again. Life is short; I have often thought

¹⁴ Although their address was written in German as "Jahnstraße 58/1", the digit following the slash is actually the floor number. In German, the ground floor is called "parterre" and numbering begins with the second floor above ground. Thus, an address written as 58/1 in German actually means they lived on the second story at address number 58 on Jahnstraße.

¹⁵ This diary page is an old-style carbon copy of a letter written by Helene Lamm to her friend Else. Helene routinely kept carbon copies of things she had typed. Sadly, we no longer know exactly who Else was. The text implies that she lived in Bad Kreuznach, and not far from Helene's family, suggesting that she was probably a childhood friend.

¹⁶ Helene Fourment was the second wife of famous and influential Flemish painter Peter Rubens, and also served as the artistic inspiration and model for many of his later works.

¹⁷ *Chiaroscuro* is an artistic effect involving a bold contrast between light and dark, often visually suggesting an out-of-frame light source illuminating part of the scene.

so in the nine months and often think so now that I have this helpless little thing in front of me.

My marriage has up to now suffered decidedly under these new circumstances. Willy and I only see each other in the evening, where we're both tired, but still have work to do, and at mid-day for half an hour. In the morning after I get Herbert ready (at least now he sleeps through the night!) I generally sleep another half-hour when Willy leaves.

I have little time to read. A while back, an excerpt of a novel out of the Frankfurter Stadtblatt dealing with the life of Günderode¹⁸ fell into my hands. I know how that once interested you. Perhaps you can find out what the title of the novel is, and buy it. Hopefully you can do more for your intellectual life than I can for mine at the moment; I mean, so far as the time for it is concerned. I still work a lot for Willy.

I recently heard that you were involved in some unpleasantness, but don't fully understand what happened. Have you smoothed it out? I hope sincerely that the peace which surrounds your home can also fill your life. I often miss the lovely gatherings at your home, the relaxation and philosophizing. If the baby and I were only in Kreuznach, that would be wonderful. He would often be crying in your garden during our aesthetic discussions. Around here I must push him through streets and parks, which is boring and a monstrous waste of time. I shall soon start looking for another apartment, one which at least has a veranda. With a veranda the same goal would be achieved – he could get some fresh air – and for me the gift of two hours each day would be priceless.

Now it's 6:30 and I must close this letter. A heartfelt farewell to you and Puppi from –

Your old friend – ¹⁹

(photo, page 18: Helene's mother, Mathilde Marcus)

(photo, page 18: Helene's father, Ludwig Marcus)

Father and Mother, Spring 1928

(these five photographs are all from page 19, and are listed clockwise from upper left)

(photo: Helene holding Herbert)

Herbert with Mama, March, 1928

Upon the grounds of the Café Milani²⁰, on the occasion of a visit from the Baurat's wife.

(photo: unknown woman with Herbert in Bad-Kreuznach)

Cristel with my little man, September 1928 – Kreuznach

(photo: Mathilde Marcus standing next to Herbert and his nanny, Deta)

Grandmother, Deta, the little man, September, 1928

(photo: Helene, Willy, and Herbert)

July 1928

(photo: Helene, Willy, and Herbert)

September, 1928 in Kreuznach (on Kurhaus street)

¹⁸ Karoline von Günderode (1780-1806) was a German romantic poet. Her last name is properly written with two 'r's, although the author's misspelling – using just one 'r' – is quite common.

¹⁹ This copy of the letter is of course unsigned, since it is a carbon copy. Presumably the author signed the original before mailing it.

²⁰ This is the historic *Kursaal Milani* building, located in the park at Seilerstraße 34.

(photo, page 20: Herbert)

December 2, 1928

Today, almost a year after Herbert's birth, I sit down again to write. Some things that would have been worth of inclusion in this journal have by now sadly been consigned to the past, but I will attempt to record some of them from memory. August 14 Herbert's first little teeth appeared, with no complications. Shortly thereafter a few more made their appearance and he now sports six beautiful snow-white teeth. He is a lively boy, and has started to imitate. He seems to enjoy music very much.

While we were moving this summer, Herbert spent five weeks in Kreuznach, during which time, we finally made the move to our new apartment on the third floor of #88 Schweizer Street. Thank God!

It is now 6 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and the three of us are together in the study. Herbert is in his little chair keeping himself busy, Papa is reading and I, of course, am writing.

I vividly recall a similar Sunday just one year ago today, a Lighting Sunday²¹, the last day I worked in the business before I went to Bethany Hospital²². It seems like yesterday, and yet so much has changed since then.

The business seems to be doing a little better now, which we desperately needed, since we were very disheartened by last year's results.

Today we took our little man to a photographer. I cannot wait to see the pictures. He looked adorable with his little shirt and tiny trousers, big eyes and beautiful black curls.

On Thursday evening we plan to celebrate his birthday, just ourselves and a few good friends. The following Sunday, Mother and Father wish to celebrate again with us. I am extremely concerned about Mother. She was examined by a specialist from Mainz, who diagnosed her with a stomach ulcer. She spends so much time in bed. Last night I laid awake thinking and worrying about her.

(set of three photographs, page 23, captioned as follows:)

December 15, 1928

The first photographs using the new camera that Uncle Willy²³ gave us for Herbert's birthday.

(photo: Helene and Herbert) Our little man with mommy

(photo: Herbert) Little man sleeping

(photo: Deta and Herbert) Little man with Deta.

He is just starting to say a few words. The first recognizable ones were: have, take (pick me up), Mama, Papa.

²¹ Lighting Sunday ("Lichtsonntag") is an obscure/archaic name for Sundays in the Christian season of Advent, the month preceding Christmas. In Christian tradition, celebrants light one candle on the first Sunday of Advent, two candles on the second Sunday, three on the third, and four candles on the last Sunday of Advent, which is the final Sunday before Christmas day.

²² The Bethany Hospital in Frankfurt ("Krankenhaus Bethanien") is still in existence.

²³ This would be Helene's brother, William "Willy" Marcus.

New Year's Day

New Year's celebration at home, but Willy and I first went out to the theater. We saw three comedies: Heinrich Mann²⁴, Schnitzler²⁵ and Molnár²⁶. Later we came back home and made punch and listened to Radio Berlin. It was lovely, lighting the Christmas tree and at midnight we lit the candles by the open window. Afterward, we slipped into bed happy and content.

(postcard, page 24: unknown)

(photo, page 24: Herbert)

(photo, page 24: Deta and Herbert)

(photo, page 24: Deta and Herbert)

February 15, 1928²⁷

Lina is leaving. Recently she has done her very utmost to make my life a living hell. On February 11 and 12 Mother came to visit; because of Lina's constant arguments and complaints, the visit was most unpleasant. I believe she has real psychological problems. Perhaps a religious zealot, as well! No more worries about the situation with Lina – I'm trying to get things back to normal. I'm done being so sentimental about it! It should be a case of one doing the job and being compensated for it; and a good working relationship is built on mutual respect. Good riddance to her!

February 20, 1929

On February 15, a new Lina started, this time a much younger version. So far she seems much more reasonable, at least for now. I have high hopes. More important than the change in maids is...

(I was interrupted while writing and cannot for the life of me think of what I was going to say!) June 20, 1929

(photo, page 25: Herbert)

(photo, page 25: Deta and Herbert)

(set of six photographs, page 26. Starting at the upper left and going clockwise:)

(photo: Herbert and Deta)

(photo: Herbert and Helene)

(photo: Herbert)

Herbert in a rose garden on Holbeinplatz

(photo: A landscape photograph)

Sunday morning in the city park

(photo: Herbert and Deta)

(photo: Herbert and an unknown woman)

²⁴ Heinrich Mann, 1871-1950, was a German novelist who wrote about social themes. He opposed authoritarianism, militarism, and the rise of the Nazis. He was exiled in 1933, and died in poverty in America.

²⁵ Arthur Schnitzler, 1862-1931, was an Austrian writer and doctor who opposed anti-semitism. His works were often frankly sexual, and he was cited specifically by Adolf Hitler as an example of "Jewish filth".

²⁶ Ferenc Molnár, 1878-1952, was a famous Hungarian Jewish playwright who wrote (among many other things) the original version of Rogers and Hammerstein's "Carousel". He emigrated to the United States in order to escape Nazi persecution of the Hungarian Jews.

²⁷ Typo in original document. Author obviously meant 1929 here, not 1928.

June 21, 1929

I haven't written in four months. It's a shame, really inexcusable. In the meantime, we're having the best summer. The little man can run around with bare legs and in light clothing or just his swim suit. He is the happiest little person, squawking, shrieking and turning somersaults in joy. He repeats a lot of what he hears, but is at 1 ½ years of age still not speaking much. He has beautiful white teeth, which have plenty of work to do considering his healthy appetite. Sundays we spend as a family. We often take the train to the city park and frolic together on the big grassy area near the rangers house - one big happy family. How we love that child! He loves to play with everything but his own toys, and takes keys and especially favors the powder in my compact. He cuddles up with his teddy bear and real kittycats. He is so adorable with his curly brown hair and big beautiful eyes.

In the meantime, I have had a second disappointment; the new maid has been gone since May 1. She has been replaced for the time being by Zissy from Kreuznach, and I had better keep my opinion of her to myself for the time being, so as not to say something I may regret later.

Our business has met with rather difficult times since the beginning of the year. At the moment things appear more hopeful. I just wish we had a more solid foundation on which to build, so that I could view the future with more promise. I would also like to travel at some point.

(Set of seven photographs. Starting at the upper left corner and going clockwise:)

(photo: Helene) Mammi

May 1929

(photo: Willy) Paps

(photo: Helene, Herbert, and probably Deta) Look at those legs!

(photo: Willy, Herbert, Helene) In the city park

(photo: Helene, Herbert, Willy)

(photo: Unknown woman pushing Herbert in a stroller, with Mathilde and Ludwig Marcus)

Sunday at home.

In Kreuznach on the Nahe²⁸ river bridge

(photo: Helene reading a book)

New Year's 1929

New Year 1929, and all our greatest expectations for the coming year have been overshadowed by a promise of a different kind. A Henriette or a little boy, whose name has not yet been decided upon, is on the way. I am thrilled for Herbert's sake. Our sweet little boy has been in Kreuznach since Christmas Eve and I miss him desperately. Sunday I can pick him up and bring him back home to me. He now speaks quite a bit, and very clearly. He is interested in technical toys; passionately loves music, but prefers only lively tunes and not melancholy ones. We changed his diet a few weeks ago. He gets only one bottle of milk in the morning, vegetables for lunch, bread and butter in the afternoon and instead of puree in the evening, we give him bread and butter, with fruit or soft cheese.

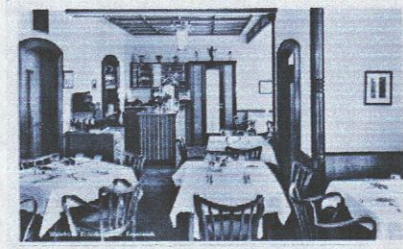
We spent Christmas in Erfurt. It was extremely nice. New Years Eve has always been my favorite and most meaningful holiday. It marks the end of one period of time and allows for the concentration of all your optimism, your energy, and all good will towards the year to come. I have already turned

²⁸ The Nahe river flows through Bad Kreuznach.

the page on last year. Yesterday after leaving the theater we were sitting in a small tavern in the Göttheplatz when I heard someone say "let it go, move on, it's over!" We've had our losses, just like everyone else.

It has been a terrible year for Germany.

Henny Picard passed away about 10 days ago on December 20 after three months of tremendous suffering. It was liver cancer, and her death was a release. It is remarkable that I am constantly confronted with the problem of death and haven't the slightest idea what to do. Willy is in Kreuznach and is causing me a lot of worry with his senseless smoking, drinking, sitting at Klapdohr's²⁹ and his uncontrollable spending. He needs his wife there to watch over him and keep him on the straight and narrow. I have written enough for now and let's hope that months do not elapse before I continue. I want to get to my Christmas book.



(photo, page 30: Helene and Herbert)

(photo, page 31) Herbert on his second birthday, December 6, 1929

(five photographs, page 32)

Herbert with Erna in Kreuznach, February 1930. Pictures taken by dear uncle Karl Nonnenmacher.

(photo, page 33) Herbert in Kreuznach, February, 1930

(photo, page 33: Helene holding her newborn daughter, Henriette Ursula Lamm)

(photo, page 34: Baby Ursula)

June 23, 1930

It has taken me half a year to come back around to my book, despite my best intentions. The big news since I last wrote is this: our little Henriette Urse³⁰ was born on May 21. She weighed 3200 gr. and arrived Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock. The fact that she is a little girl and that Herbert now really has a little sister has brought us great joy. She was born with, and still has, blue-gray eyes and cute blond hair. She nursed very well at once, and I was thrilled.

Herbert has not yet graced us with his opinion of his little sister. I think my sweet boy is jealous. He has become a little difficult, and very wild, and has taken to breaking things. He does speak clearly and properly now and says the most endearing things. For example, yesterday he saw someone throwing yellow sand on the street and said, "Look Mama, the man is powdering the street". A few days ago I put him into Kindergarten, from where he returns each day very dirty, but happy.

He is a good child, not easily offended, especially strong and adorable. He likes trains and cars above anything else. He is not quite potty trained yet, but nearly so. After he does his "big business" he

²⁹ *Weinhaus Klapdohr* was a tavern in Bad Kreuznach.

³⁰ The baby's middle name ("Urse") is underlined in original text, possibly indicating the author's intention to use the middle name as her primary name. Adopting the middle name for daily use was common in the author's generation. In fact she did so herself; the author was born "Johanna Helene Marcus", but always used her middle name.

demands a reward. Papa and Herbert love each other very much, but Papa is a softy and allows him to get away with everything.

Little Ursel was born in Sachsenhausen Hospital³¹ (at Schiffer street #82) attended by Dr. Weinsheimer. It was so beautiful there. This Wednesday it will be five weeks since her birth, 5 weeks in which I allowed myself some time off to rest and recover. I now have to focus on work again. Baby Ursel is already lifting her little head marvelously, and has started to laugh. She has a sweet plump little body. She gets five meals a day: at 6:00 in the morning, at 10:00, at 2:00 in the afternoon, 6:00 in the evening and 10:00 at night, and she gets her bath before 10:00 in the morning. Since mid-April I have a new Deta - her name is Grete Berg. She is wonderful with the children, but has an obvious preference for the little one.

The business is giving us trouble.

Two months ago Mother was operated on for her ulcers, and has been receiving radiation treatment in Professor Holfelder's clinic. I see no end to this tiring and depressing treatment, and even so, success is uncertain. At home in Kreuznach, the usual friction between Father and Willy continues.³² It's really bad; and in addition we now have all these horrendous expenses.³³ Mother looks miserable and wretched and the only thing keeping her alive is the hope of better health.

(photo, page 36: Ludwig and Mathilde Marcus) The parents

(photo, page 36: Ursula and her nanny) Grete Berg - a loyal soul

On April 21 – the second day of Easter – Erna married her Karl Nonnenmacher and became a Roman Catholic. On May 17 Aenne in America became a happy mother of baby Eric Milton³⁴, a 4 pound, 100 gram boy.³⁵ There is great joy.

Sunday, July 13, 1930

Today, Sunday afternoon, alone. Pappi went to the zoo with Herbert. Deta³⁶ took Ursel for a walk.

Mother has been feeling very poorly the last couple days due to weakness of the heart. We'll have to wait and see whether she can overcome it.

My two little ones are fine. Herbert's vocabulary is growing constantly. Yesterday he surprised me with the hit song "Oh Donna Clara, you are so beautiful, and your beauty drives me wild."³⁷ Ursel is

³¹ Sachsenhausen Hospital is still in operation in Frankfurt, in the exact same location on the bank of the Main river.

³² Her father and her husband disliked each other intensely, and bickered frequently.

³³ Medical insurance was not common at the time. The expense of Mathilde Marcus' health care would have been a heavy burden on the family budget.

³⁴ In keeping with the author's usual habit of swapping first and middle names, she here likewise reverses the first and middle names of Ann Marcus Goldstein's son, Milton Eric Goldstein.

³⁵ The author writes "4 pfd. u. 100 gr." (4 pounds and 100 grams). The word "pfund" is somewhat ambiguous, since it can mean either a metric pound (500 grams) or a regular English pound. However it would have been unusual to combine metric and English units in the same measurement, so she is most likely using metric pounds. Milton's birth weight is thus 2100 grams, or about 4.6 English pounds.

³⁶ Wasn't Deta replaced by Grete Berg three months ago? Possibly the author just wrote the wrong name?

³⁷ These are misquoted lyrics from a popular German song of the period. The correct lyrics are *Oh Donna Clara, ich hab' dich tanzen geseh'n, und Deine Schönheit hat mich toll gemacht* ("Oh Donna Clara, I saw you dancing, and your beauty drove me wild.")

cooing loudly from the changing table, breathes in and then out with a happy shout. I am still breastfeeding her and hopefully can continue to do so for some time. Her blond hair is growing steadily dark and she will probably be as dark-haired as Herbert.

Herbert's kindergarten experience, which started off so well, only lasted four days. On the third day he came home with a huge bruise on his hip and on the fourth day had a gash in his head. He is a lively rascal. On our morning strolls between 8:30 and 9:30 we have the most enjoyable conversations, "Look Mama, there is a postal truck" or "there is the streetcar" or by every Kaffee-Hag³⁸ heart: "if you should ever give your heart away, give it to me!"³⁹



April 19, 1931

Mother's picture is in front of me, hanging above the desk. Her suffering ended on September 21 of last year. The picture is the enlargement of a snapshot by Wilhelm Völker⁴⁰. Her death was horrible, like her suffering. Last September was the most unbearable month of my life, and October, November and December were almost as bad. Mother's death shook my soul to the core! How beautiful she was at the end. We both knew when we saw each other on Wednesday, two days before she died, that it was the last time. Why did this fate have to strike such a life-loving woman, one who was so generous and vital? She was only 57 years old.

On September 4 (I didn't tell mother) our business collapsed. We are not the exception in these economically disastrous times. It was, however, a catastrophe for me. When I think back to those long silent weeks when we sat facing each other across the table, each of us sunk in our own horrible pessimism. And now, added to Mother's untimely death, the feeling that there is so much practical work to be done. Little Ursel must always be breast-fed between various business tasks. I will never forget the way she screamed when I, lost as I was in my misery and sadness, took her to my breast on the night of September 21.

Little Ursel is a sensitive child, sweet and funny, a real little girl.

Herbert has been in the Theodorehalle children's hospital for the last 14 days, right after he and Ursel had severe bronchitis.

(photo, page 40: the Lamm family) Christmas 1930

(photo, page 40: Herbert and Ursula)

April 19, 1931

In December we made some arrangements concerning the business; despite that, we don't have the sort of solid foundation upon which we could work cheerfully and without fear.

Today, being Sunday, Willy, Zissy and I had lunch, walked in the woods, and came home for coffee. Grete is leaving tomorrow and Zissy will take care of the children. I finished a book today, *Franziska*

³⁸ Kaffee Hag is a brand of German instant coffee, still in existence today, which uses a large red heart as its corporate symbol.

³⁹ Lyrics from another popular song: *Wenn Du einmal dein Herz verschenkst, dann schenk es mir* ("If you give your heart, then give it to me")

⁴⁰ We do not know whether the Wilhelm Völker here mentioned is any relation to Baurat Hugo Völker. There is no record of the Baurat having children, although the records themselves could be incomplete.

von Altenhausen.⁴¹ It reminded the person who gave it to me – and also reminds me – of my friendship with Willy Stein.⁴² Something about it seems strangely duplicitous.

Ursel got her first two teeth somewhat late, on March 4. Yesterday the last of her first six teeth came through. She is happy. Her diet consists of one part milk and one part oatmeal gruel, vegetables, potatoes, applesauce, and orange juice; afternoons the milk mixture again; and gruel at night. As far as solid food, she refuses it all.

(two photographs, page 41: Ursula with her nanny) Ursel with Grete, Easter, 1931

(set of five photographs, page 42)

(photo)

Mama, Zissy, Herbert, Ursel, Easter 1931

(photo: Willy)

(photo) Ursel, 11 months

(photo) Herbert – 3 ¼ years

(photo: Helene)

The whole family! What a surprise! (no one moved and spoiled the picture)

(photo, page 43: Milton Goldstein) Eric Milton, the cousin from America, Easter 1931⁴³

(photo, page 43: Helene's sister, Aenne "Ann" Marcus Goldstein, holding her son Milton)

(set of five photographs, page 45)

(photo: Milton Goldstein)

The cousin from America! 1 ½ years old

(photo: Ursula)

Ursel – 1 year old – on a walk at the forest house

(photo: Ursula with Helene)

(photo: Ursula with Willy)

(photo: Ursula)

Ursel in July 1931

⁴¹ Published in 1927, "Franziska von Altenhausen" by Johannes Werner is an epistolary novel, supposedly based upon actual letters and set in 1898-1903.

⁴² We do not know who Willy Stein was; however Aenne Marcus Goldstein reported that Helene was engaged seven times (!) before she finally married Willy. Possibly this was one of her prior engagements?

⁴³ Milton Goldstein confirms that he and his mother made an extended visit to the German family in Bad Kreuznach, but he recalls the dates as being 1932-33.

(postcard, page 46 – not in chronological order)

January 4, 1949

To Willy! ⁴⁴

I wish you lots of happiness,
Health, money and success,
I promise: I will improve
Will think over every move,
For instance, not to flirt with Heinrich, ⁴⁵
Generally behave, and not disgrace you,
Also will avoid borrowing money from Seigfried, ⁴⁶
And not be too generous with the wine and beer.

Hope with all these aspects bright and gay,
You'll spend a happy, happy birthday.

Helen

(set of seven photos, page 47: all of Ursula)

Ursel's very first steps! On a Sunday morning, April 1931 in the Oberschreins field.

(photo, page 48) Herbert, 3 ½ years old, Essenheim Park

(photo, page 49: Ursula)

A peaceful picture. Ursel, 1 year old, drinking her bottle

(set of six photos, page 49: an outing with some unknown friends. Note that the same friends appear again on page 56)

A Sunday in May 1931 in Lido-Bad in Bonames ⁴⁷

(photo, page 50: Helene and Willy) In Taunus! ⁴⁸

(photo, page 51: Helene)

(photo, page 51: Willy)

Mammi fell asleep on a Sunday afternoon. Pappi is reading

(caption, page 51) The old gentleman takes a wine-tasting trip on the Mosel river with his favorite niece Hilde from Berlin; unfortunately he got tipsy and is now sleeping it off. (Summer 1931) ⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Here is another postcard pasted into the journal out of proper chronological order. This poem rhymes perfectly in the mixture of German and English in which it was written. As with other poems by this author, the tone is humorous. All the promises she makes (not to get drunk, fall into debt, or flirt with obnoxious men) are made with tongue firmly planted in cheek.

⁴⁵ Heinrich Lisman. Helene's boss at the Red Cross was a man named Rudolf Lisman. Heinrich also worked there, as did Helene's friend Henny Rabe. Henny loved Heinrich all her life, but he was married to someone else. Heinrich was a known flirt and had affairs; by promising not to flirt with him, Helene is making a joke. When the Lamm family later moved to Richmond, they were sponsored by Gerald Lisman, Heinrich's son.

⁴⁶ Siegfried Rosenthal, a family friend in Richmond. The Rosenthals were members of the "New American Club", a group of German Jewish emigrants in Richmond.

⁴⁷ Bonames is a historic Stadtteil (municipal region or neighborhood) in Frankfurt.

⁴⁸ The Taunus mountains in Hessen, Germany. Willy is wearing knickerbockers in this photograph, which was a country style and not normal for him. Presumably these are his wilderness vacation clothes!

⁴⁹ Unfortunately this photograph has been lost.

(set of five photos, page 52: around the city of Frankfurt)
Beautiful Frankfurt-on-the-Main

Sunday, February 28, 1932

Easter has come around again and I realize that the last time I wrote was Easter of the previous year. Since then Herbert turned four years old in December and Ursel will be 2 in May. Herbert got very ill in July and we had his tonsils removed. He has been developing well since then. He is very articulate. Ursel, however, is not very fond of talking. She understands everything but rarely replies, and when she does, it is incomprehensible. She is a lively, lively little thing and at 1 3/4 years you can already take her by the hand for walks. Zissy is fabulous with the children.

Conditions in Germany are bleak, and things are still very difficult for us so far as the business is concerned.⁵⁰ We plan on moving into a new apartment on April 1, 1932.

I am working long hours but am unfortunately not entirely healthy. We're falling out of contact with Kreuznach, since travel has become too expensive for us and letters don't seem to get written. Willy is unfortunately still wife-less and irresponsible. The old man⁵¹ is in fabulous health and great spirits.

(photo, page 53: Irene, daughter of Arthur Lamm) Irene Lamm, Amsterdam, Holland

(photo, page 54: Ursula and Herbert are the second and third children from the left)
Kindergarten Richter Koch, 1932

Sunday, July 21, 1935

The most noteworthy events of the last three years were:

April 1, 1932 – April 1, 1935 Emil Claar Street 10, first floor

Lovely area. The apartment however is dark and cold and thus we ultimately opted to move to third floor of Eppsteinerstrasse 44 on April 1, 1935. Herbert has grown to be a very tall, slim boy, 7 1/2 years old. He started kindergarten – together with Ursel – with Mrs. Richter-Koch ("Auntie Lida"). Later they went to Mrs. S. ("Auntie Liesel"). Since April 1, 1934 they have attended Mrs. Hamman's private school at #13 Telemannstrasse.⁵²

Herbert is not keen on his schoolwork, with the exception of mathematics, where he excels. He has great difficulties reading. Zissy is no longer capable of supervising his work. Herbert has been filled by a powerful determination to wander in his first year of school. I tried hiring Ilsa Morgenstern to tutor him in the afternoons, but without effect. We later took him to Miss Jourdan at #18 Hansa Allee in the afternoons – a real boy's education and finally he has begun to thrive at school.

Herbert is happy and is making friends. He has begun his religious initiation with visits to the synagogue on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. Miss Jourdan was formerly a Social

⁵⁰ This was during the great depression.

⁵¹ She's referring to her father, Ludwig Marcus.

⁵² Annie Hamann ran a school for Jewish children in Frankfurt.

Democrat⁵³ and a member of Parliament, but was removed because she's not Aryan.⁵⁴

Ursel is very intelligent for her age, 5 years and 2 months. She is a very small child, but never ceases to make clever comments. Compared to Herbert she eats very little.

They both love each other very much, but don't get along. They bicker incessantly. Ursel has dark blond, curly hair.

We, Papa and Mama, turned 48 and 40 years old. Our economic outlook is more satisfactory, but has required the most intensive effort (with a government subsidy in 1934).

As of January 31 - National Socialism. Hindenberg turned the reins of government over to Hitler.

(set of three photos, page 56: another trip to the park with the same friends from page 49)

The 3rd Reich is born.

One is suddenly Aryan or non-Aryan, and the latter are being driven from civil service.

Constantly growing anti-Semitism.

We are considering relocating abroad.

Our situation has become nearly unbearable; pool visits have become impossible and our social life is practically non-existent.

(photo, page 57: Willy)

(photo, page 57: Helene)

(photo, page 57: Herbert)

March, 1932

(photo, page 57: Zissy takes the children for a pony-cart ride)

Easter 1934. Zissy, Herbert, Ursel, Guenther from Emil Claarstrasse on a Sunday at the zoo.

(photo, page 58: the author's niece, Edith, daughter of Erna Marcus Nonnenmacher) Edith

(photo, page 58: Helene and Ursula)

Willy is in Kreuznach since the 1934 beginning of his relationship with Annemarie Kullmer, this is most unsatisfactory. Willy's character is very weak, sometimes even pathological. He hasn't adjusted to the changed circumstances of German Jews, in which tactical mistakes have the most severe consequences. Due to Gallat's dismissal there was a demonstration on May 15th at #8 Hochstraße.⁵⁵

⁵³ The Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) is the oldest and largest social/liberal political party in Germany. The SPD opposed the Ermächtigungsgesetz ("Enabling Act") of 1933, by which the Nazis assumed dictatorial powers. They were subsequently banned by the Nazis, and many party leaders were jailed.

⁵⁴ Frau Jourdan and Fraulein Jourdan (mother & daughter) ran an after-school daycare. Fraulein Berta Jourdan is still remembered in Hessen, Germany; her birthday appears on the "Gedenkenstagen" (remembrance days) website of the Hessen regional government, with the following listing: *Birthday of Berta Jourdan 21.06.1892. Berta Jourdan, of Frankfurt and Rhodesia, was an educator and teacher, an SPD politician, and an elected representative to the Prussian Parliament. In 1933 she was fired from public schools and became a private school teacher for Jewish children. She later emigrated to Rhodesia, but returned to Frankfurt in 1969, where she fought against social prejudice. Died 04.12.1981.*

⁵⁵ We don't know who "Gallat" was, nor why he was dismissed, but by 1934 the only people who could get away with public demonstrations and smashing windows were the Nazis. The author must be describing a Nazi demonstration, with nearby Jews arrested "for their own safety".

Nine windows were smashed in, and father spent the night in protective custody; Willy too.⁵⁶ Willy arrived Sunday morning for four days in Frankfurt. He is depressed and spreads depression everywhere he goes.

Willy and Father are at each other's throats, they have a totally unnatural relationship. Aenne⁵⁷ sent us the paperwork for visas to the U.S. but Willy refuses. He is unsure of our finances and how we will get by and is also afraid of change.

(photo, page 59: Erna Marcus Nonnenmacher and her daughter Edith)

(photo, page 59: Edith Nonnenmacher)

(photo, page 60: Edith Nonnenmacher, Herbert, and Ursula)

(photo, page 60: Helene, Herbert, and Ursula)

(photo, page 60: Herbert and Ursula with unknown woman, meeting a dachshund puppy)

(photo, page 60: Ursula and Herbert)

Kreuznach, September 1934

(caption, page 61) Mrs. Baurat took this photograph in September 1934. It was a lovely day.

(two photos, page 61) Ursel, wearing glasses, is playing doctor:

"Where does it hurt?"

"Here in my tummy."

"You will have to go to the hospital. I cannot help you."

(photo, page 61: Helene)

(caption, page 61) The Baurat was pensioned off in 1933 after a disciplinary proceeding that was later struck down. He is still a friend to me in correspondence, but since he is dependent upon his government pension, he has to be careful what he says.

(caption, page 61) Dr. Horst Eckstein, an outstanding National Socialist.⁵⁸

(caption, page 62) August 1934: the children in Eppstein in Taunus. They stayed there for only 8 days, since both got homesick. It was such a beautiful place, with a fabulous garden that sloped up and downhill.

(postcard, page 62 – unknown who wrote it)

(two photos, page 63: Ursula and Herbert in sandbox)

August 26, 1934 in the sandbox in Grünhof.

Papa had just returned from an 8-day vacation at Neusbach, in the Black Forest. He was nervous from walking too much.

(photo, page 63: Herbert, Helene and Ursula)

Grünhof, an inn, located halfway between Eschersheim and Marbachweg.

⁵⁶ Although *protective custody* ("Schutzhaft") was originally conceived as a means of providing police protection for potential victims or witnesses, the Nazis broadened its use in 1933, making it an instrument for arbitrary arrest without judicial review. Most of the people murdered in the concentration camps were technically under "protective custody".

⁵⁷ The author's sister Aenne ("Anne") Marcus Goldstein, who had already emigrated to America.

⁵⁸ Horst Eckstein lived in Kreuznach. Helene was interested in him prior to her marriage to Willy.

(photo, page 63: Herbert, Helene and Ursula)

Picture taken with a Kodak, a present for Herbert from Mrs. Kabelitz

(photo, page 63: Ursula, Herbert, and unknown woman – possibly Frau Kabelitz?)

(two photos, page 65) At the Mack pool⁵⁹

(Last picture taken at the pool.)

in Eschersheim July 1, 1935.

It was a lot of fun, aunt Paula Rosenberg and aunt & uncle Bender were with us. We played with rings, adults and children splashed in the water all day. Mama got a terrible sunburn.

Herbert and Ursel have been in Kreuznach since July 14 1935. Herbert writes nice postcards.

(two photos, page 65: churches) I went with dad (now 75 years old) to the Huchels Inn in Cochem-an-der-Mosel.⁶⁰ It's a very Catholic region, with unthinkably unbelievable scenery, quite overpowering to me. We drank a lot of Mosel wine. One time we hiked five and a half kilometers to the triple-cross baroque church in Beilstein.

(postcard, page 66) Mammi sent this card as a joke to Herbert in Kreuznach. He colored it in and sent it back to me today, Sunday July 28 1935. It made me so happy!

(attached letter, page 67: not transcribed, because the childish handwriting is too hard to read!)

Letter from Herbert, who is on vacation.

(photo, page 68: Ursula is standing at the left end of the second row. Herbert is in the third row, just to the right of center, wearing a cocked beret and a vest over a shirt with collar.)

The children in Königsten in Taunus, September 1936. They only stayed a short while – they got homesick.

January 1, 1936

We spent the holidays quietly. The first day of Christmas Father came to visit and it was apparent that he had aged considerably. On the second day of Christmas we went for a walk. New Years we went to the movies to see *Mazurka*,⁶¹ returned home around 11:00. Because the sale of our business in Kreuznach is proceeding Willy now wants to go to America. In the meantime the Nuremberg Laws⁶² went into force in September. Zissy could have gotten married, but will marry her American fiancée in January.⁶³ On the 2nd Mrs. Otto will arrive, busy with family connections. We'll have to wait and see.

The children are very precious. After spending a very active New Year's Day, Ulla proclaimed: "Herbert is a good guy after all."

⁵⁹ The Mack pool (*Strandbad Mackh*) was a public pool in the Eschersheim neighborhood of Frankfurt.

⁶⁰ *Cochem an der Mosel* is a small town on the river Mosel in Germany's Rheinland region.

⁶¹ *Mazurka* is a 1935 German film from director Willi Forst, a thriller / tear-jerker with a surprise ending.

⁶² The Nuremberg Laws were passed unanimously by the German parliament in September 1935, and formalized discrimination against Jews. The laws (1) defined anyone with three or more Jewish grandparents as a Jew, (2) stripped Jews of their German citizenship, declaring them "nationals" but not "citizens", (3) banned marriage and sexual relations between Jews and Aryans, (4) prohibited Jews from hiring women of childbearing age, and (5) prohibited Jews from displaying the German flag or national colors.

⁶³ The Nuremberg Laws prohibited Jews from marrying or having children with non-Jews. Zissy was Jewish and her American boyfriend presumably was not, so they could either marry prior to the Nuremberg Laws or else wait until she traveled to America and could marry him under American laws.

Willy's heart muscles are weak. He no longer smokes, since he has received strict orders not to. Thankfully, he has laid his cigars aside without much of a fuss. We have submitted a detailed plan for emigration to America, and nervously await the result, but this is a matter for the future since the business is going well right now and there's no particular rush.

The Nonnenmacher's marriage seems problematic and if it weren't for their child they would probably separate. I received a darling picture of Milton. Everyone was so especially nice at Christmas. From the Baurat 2 books for the children and some perfume for me. I had to pick up Henny's⁶⁴ presents with a suitcase. She is such a lovely person, and also has her own share of problems. Papa is in bed after an oxygenated bath and now calls for me to attend him.

June 6, 1936

Today is a rainy Sunday. So many things have happened, which isn't surprising in these fast-paced times. Zissy was unable to leave for America because she couldn't get a visa. Willy on the contrary received his visa April 15th and has already bought his ticket for departure on June 15th. He is now making the rounds visiting friends and saying his final good-byes. My former relationship with him has become troubled because of the division of property.⁶⁵ It is sad.

On April 15th Ursel started school. She is the smallest child in the school. She is so delicate, sensitive, witty and eager, but doesn't eat well. On May 21 we had a birthday party for her and invited a good number of darling children.

Life in Germany has become hard to bear, however it would be difficult to find our footing financially in another country, since we will not be allowed to take any money. Especially Palestine, which was never very appealing to me, has become an impossibility due to the terrible Arabs/Kurds.

I spent some time at Gardone⁶⁶ on Lake Garda⁶⁷ from the 4th to the 14th of April. Interesting scenery and a delightful change for me, but very cold.

Willy is in better health now. He quit smoking and is gaining weight. We live a very withdrawn existence, and our circle of acquaintance has become extremely small. It is so cheerless to be always with these terribly worried people, and I'm so dreadfully tired every night.

(postcard, page 70) Happy New Year

⁶⁴ This is her close friend Henny Rabe, who lived in Frankfurt, and not her sister-in-law Henny Lamm. Both names were short for Henriette.

⁶⁵ The business in Kreuznach was from her side of the family, not his. Apparently there were some hard feelings about the disposition of the money from the sale.

⁶⁶ The Gardone Riviera is in the Brescia region of Italy, on the shores of Lake Garda.

⁶⁷ Lake Garda is the largest lake in Italy, and a major tourist destination. It is an alpine lake, so the weather varies from near freezing in winter to very pleasant in midsummer. Helene is visiting in April, which is pretty darn cold, and thus not very expensive.

(postcard, page 70)

Dear Pappi,⁶⁸

Today you turned 50 years old,
 You still have your beautiful hair,
 You were recently so very ill,
 Thank God you have recovered!

We love you very much,
 Nobody could ever love you more.
 We wish you on this special day
 Loads of happiness, good luck and no more trouble.

We all want to behave for you,
 We promise you that.

(signed) Mammi
 Herbert Lamm
 Ulla

January 4, 1937

(photo, page 70: Herbert and Ursula)

Frankfurt-on-the-Main, July 11, 1937

Herbert is in bed with a cough. Papa and Ulla are on vacation in Erfurt so Mama has time to tend to her writing. Much has happened since I last wrote.

August 21, 1936 Herbert had his appendix removed at 11:00 p.m. after a few hours' pain. September 1, Willy had the exact same operation and both operations went well. However after his return home, he had an embolism on September 14th, followed later by two more, and finished off with a case of pneumonia.⁶⁹ He was unable to work until December 20th, but is now apparently healthy and even has been able to swim again.

We had to move out of our beautiful apartment on Eppsteinerstraße, since it was on the fourth floor, and since February we have been living on Fürstenbergerstraße #167, on the second floor. The neighbors there are very nice.

Frankfurt-on-the-Main, June 16 1938

It would be quite honestly impossible to recall all the events of the past year. And what a year it was!

In the meantime we have realized that it's impossible for us to stay in Germany. We will have to give up the business. I have come to terms with it and am trying to keep a positive outlook while still viewing the reality of two middle-aged people being forced to start all over again with nothing. Where

⁶⁸ This birthday poem rhymes perfectly in German. Again note the author's touches of humor: Willy was actually bald as an egg. Note also that the word she used for *trouble* ("Plage") in line 8 is unusual. One wonders if she picked it because it has a double meaning of *plague*.

⁶⁹ Willy was actually quite sick. His daughter remembers him coughing up blood. Since it was difficult for Jews to get good medical care at this time, Willy was nursed at home by Brother Damasus, a Christian monk. The brother wore a black robe and a white collar and was (so far as Ursula can recall) a Roman Catholic. He particularly liked canned sardines in tomato sauce, and the family referred to sardines as "Damasus-fish" forever after.

we will go, I still do not know, maybe Rhodesia or Australia, possibly even the U.S. although probably not. We have received very discouraging letters from there, and after receiving one such from Willy,⁷⁰ I broke off further correspondence with him.

On May 11 Ursel had her appendix removed. It came on suddenly as it did with Herbert. I am including a sweet picture of Ursel.

(photo, page 72: Helene holding infant Ursula)

(photo, page 72: Ursula, but much older, approximately eight years)⁷¹

I came home from the hospital today, a problem going back to Ursel's birth. Probably. I hope I am fully cured, so that spiritual health and bodily health can go hand in hand.

The children have developed nicely.

The German part of this journal ceases at this point, as conditions in Germany grow ever more dangerous. In late 1938 Helene's father is beaten to death, and Willy is arrested and interned in a concentration camp. Helene manages to secure Willy's release using false travel documents, and he flees to Holland where his sister Lola lives. Helene and the children remain a few more months in Frankfurt as she struggles to get visas and tickets to any country that will accept them - a difficult task as many Jews are by now attempting to escape from Germany.

In early 1939, the family finally gets transatlantic passage aboard the "Gerolstein" to Ellis Island, and then on the "Santa Paula" to Colombia. Upon the deck of the ocean liner, Helene begins writing again, this time in English.

*The story continues in
"Helen's Journal Part Two: Colombia".*

⁷⁰ Her brother, Willy Marcus, who was already settled in America by this point.

⁷¹ This photograph was the one used on Ursula's passport when the family left Germany; note that Ursula's hair has been brushed back so that her ear is visible, which was standard in identification photographs at the time.